

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 165 228

EA 011 064

AUTHOR Matthews, Kenneth M.
TITLE School Business Officials and the Price of Education in Georgia.
PUB DATE 2 Nov 78
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Georgia Association of School Business Officials Annual Conference (13th, Albany, Georgia, November 1978)
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 HC-\$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Personnel; Costs; Educational Finance; *Expenditure Per Student; *Financial Support; Public Relations; *School Community Relationship; School Taxes; Tax Support
IDENTIFIERS *Georgia

ABSTRACT

Between the 1966-76 and 1976-77 school years, expenditures per pupil for the maintenance and operation of Georgia public schools rose 146 percent. Even after adjustments for inflation, this is a substantial increase. Faced with taxpayer resistance to increasing taxes, educational leaders can choose from three options. They can adopt an aggressive public relations program to gain financial support; they can voluntarily reduce requests for revenue; or they can merely keep asking for more funds until taxpayers refuse to pay. If the first option is chosen, educational leaders must convince the public that if schools are to meet the expectations of society, public education must have a significant portion of our financial resources. If the second option is chosen, educational leaders must be sure not to overreact and ask for less than the public is willing to pay. The third option fails to take advantage of the duty of educational leaders to influence public opinion. Public confidence in the management of public education can be influenced greatly by the success school business officials have in applying sound management practices and keeping the public informed of their progress. (Author/JM)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED165228

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS AND
THE PRICE OF EDUCATION IN GEORGIA

Kenneth M. Matthews

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Kenneth M. Matthews

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND
USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

EA 011 064

Paper presented at the Georgia Association of School Business
Officials Thirteenth Annual Conference. Albany, Georgia, November 2,
1978.

SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS AND
THE PRICE OF EDUCATION IN GEORGIA*

Kenneth M. Matthews

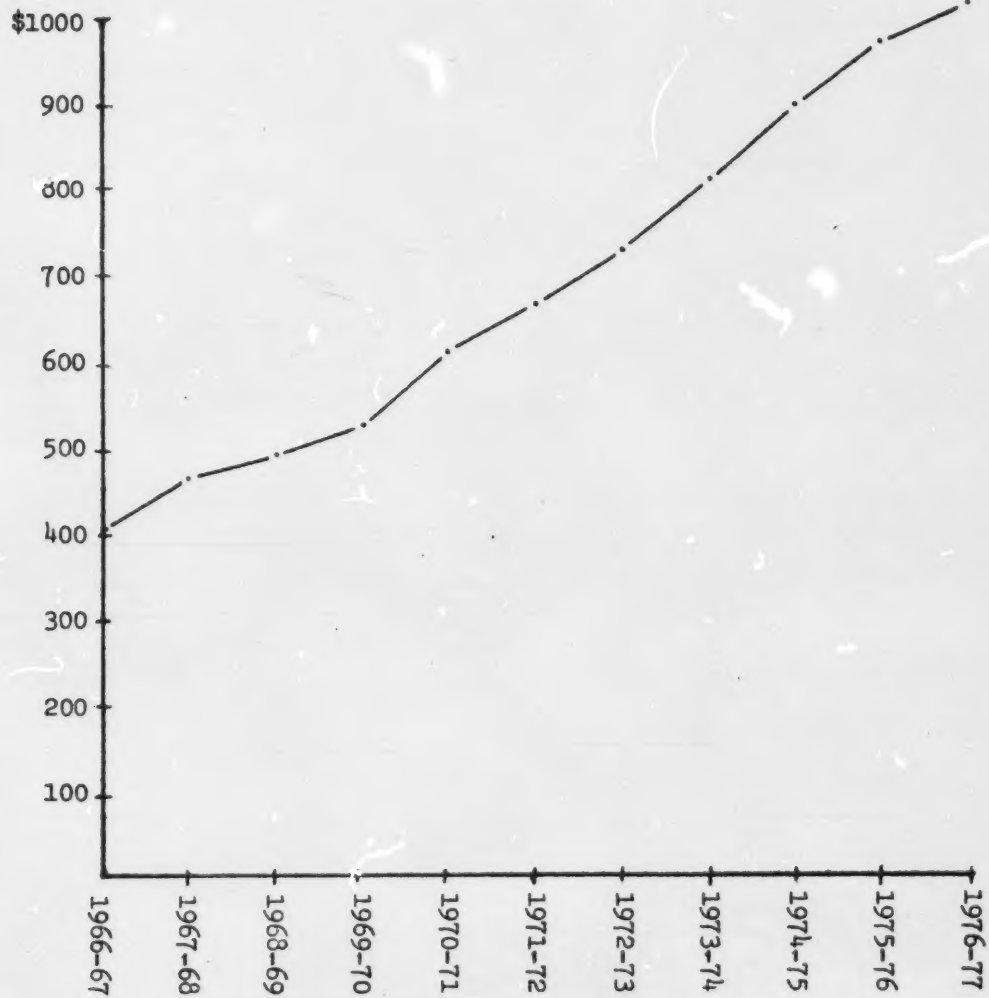
The price of education in Georgia has increased dramatically in the last decade. While average daily attendance in public elementary and secondary schools in Georgia increased only 1.24 percent between the 1966-67 and 1976-77 school years, expenditures per pupil in average daily attendance for the maintenance and operation of Georgia public schools rose 146.02 percent (see Figure 1).

Many educational leaders are concerned with the quality and equity of educational opportunities and closely monitor changes in the percentages of support for public education coming from local, state, and federal sources (see Figure 2). However, taxpayers tend to focus on the increases in taxes, local taxes in particular. When local taxes for the support of public education are viewed from the perspective of taxpayers, concern for the price of education is understandable. Receipts for the maintenance and operation of public schools from local sources increased 250.47 percent between the 1966-67 and 1976-77 school years.

When the effects of inflation, as indicated by changes in the Consumer Price Index, are taken into consideration, much of the increase in local receipts may be attributed to inflation. However, even with

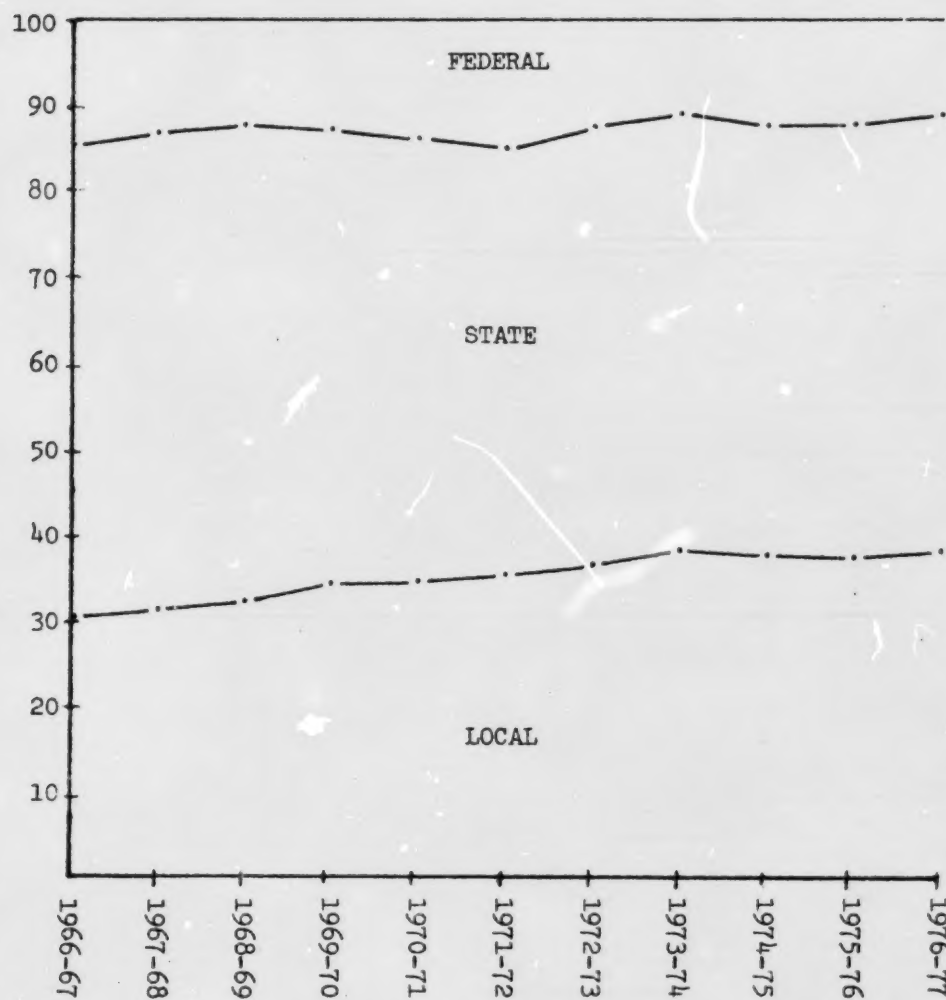
*This paper is adapted from "Leadership and the Price of Public Education," unpublished manuscript, 1978. Georgia data for the 1976-77 school year were provided by the Statistic Unit of the Georgia Department of Education, Dr. Gene Wallace, Coordinator.

Figure 1 - Costs per ADA Child for Maintenance and Operation



Source: 1976 Current School Expenditures, Georgia Department of Education, p. 5.

Figure 2 - Receipts for Maintenance and Operation from Federal, State, and Local Sources as a Percent of Total Receipts for Maintenance and Operation



Source: 1976 State-Local-Federal Receipts for Maintenance and Operation, Georgia Department of Education.

adjustments for changes in the Consumer Price Index, substantial increases in local receipts for the maintenance and operation of the public schools of Georgia remain (see Figure 3).

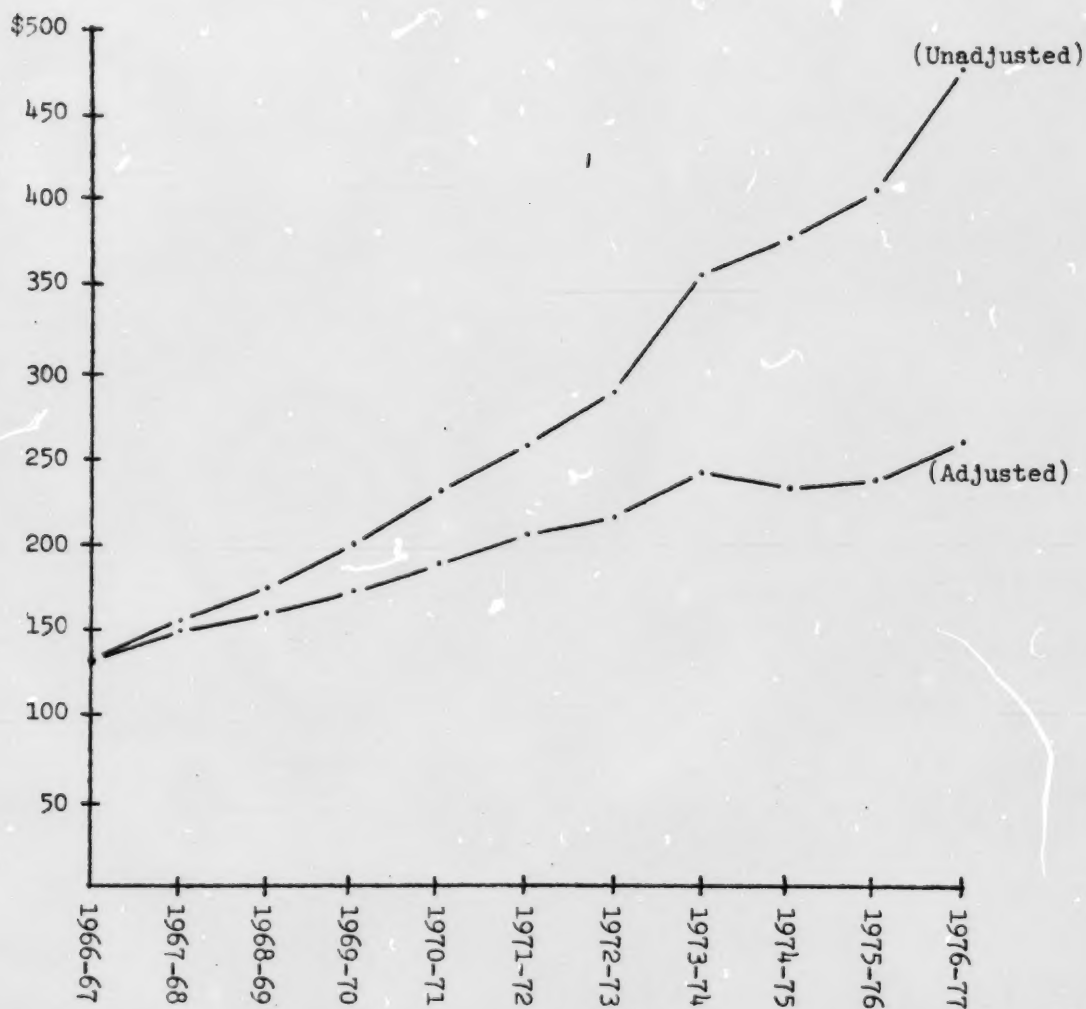
While educational opportunities have undoubtedly been extended in the last decade, taxpayer concern for the price of education has become a major consideration in school finance. Faced with resistance to increasing taxes, educational leaders may choose from several options: (1) Adopt an aggressive political and public relations program to generate financial support, (2) Anticipate public reactions and voluntarily reduce requests, (3) Keep asking for greater amounts until taxpayers refuse to grant additional funds for the support of public education.

As educational leaders consider the alternatives above, many will experience internal value conflicts because of their educational positions and their perspectives as taxpayers. Some will question their ability to alter the ultimate outcome. Each will make a personal decision as to the role he will play.

In considering the option of adopting an aggressive political and public relations program to generate financial support for public education, the question of "Why should taxpayers provide additional funds for public education?" becomes a central concern. Our society expects public educational institutions to develop our youths intellectually and socially. They also expect schools to play a major role in assisting our youths to become physically and mentally healthy adults with moral integrity who make economic and cultural contributions to our way of life. The public expects much of their schools, and additional demands continue

Figure 3 - Adjusted and Unadjusted Receipts from Local Sources for Maintenance and Operation

(Amounts in Millions)



SOURCES: 1976 State - Local - Federal Receipts for Maintenance and Operation, Georgia Department of Education and Monthly Labor Review, August 1978, p. 81.

to be made. If schools are to meet the expectations of society, then public education must have a significant portion of our financial resources. As expectations increase financial support should also increase. Without aggressive action on the part of educational leaders, increases in financial support for public education will become less likely as other Public agencies intensify their efforts to secure a larger share of the tax dollar.

If educational leaders choose to anticipate public resistance to rising educational expenditures and reduce their requests for funds, then they also decide not to ask for the level of funding they feel is necessary to provide desirable educational programs. A very real danger in selecting this option is that educational leaders will overreact. They may choose to request funding for a lower quality of education than the public desires and is willing to finance.

A third option is to keep asking for greater amounts of financial support until the public refuses to grant additional funds. From a purely theoretical point of view, this option is consistent with our national position of limiting the power of the executive branch of government. However, when adopted as the only mode of operation, it does not take advantage of a major dimension of educational leadership - that of influencing public opinion.

The action taken by school business officials will have a significant impact on the future financing of public education in Georgia. Unless the public has confidence in the management of their schools they will be reluctant to provide additional funds. School business

officials have always been aware of the need for applying sound business management practices in education. With increased concern for the price of education the need is greater than ever before. Perhaps of even greater importance is the need to create an awareness of the sound business management practices being applied in the public schools of Georgia.

School business officials have an intimate knowledge of the business affairs of local school districts. This knowledge base enables school business officials to make a unique contribution. Public confidence in the management of the public education can be influenced greatly by the success school business officials have in applying sound management practices and keeping the public informed of their progress.